

'It's All About the Ships'

New NAVSEA commander shares vision, mission priorities

Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) had its 43rd commander assume the helm today following the first change of command held here in nearly five years. Vice Adm. Willy Hilarides assumed command from retiring Vice Adm. Kevin McCoy during a ceremony held at Leutze Park on the Washington Navy Yard.

Hilarides was raised in Chicago before his admission to the U.S. Naval Academy where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science, Physics in 1981. During his service of nearly 33 years, Hilarides served as commanding officer of USS Key West (SSN 722), Director, Advanced Submarine Research and Development, Program Manager of SSGN Program and Program Executive Office, Submarines and also served aboard USS Pargo (SSN 650), USS Gurnard (SSN 662) and USS Maryland (SSBN 738).

Strategic Framework

Vice Adm. Hilarides has laid out a strategic framework including the vision for NAVSEA, mission priorities, core values and the key enablers to accomplish the priorities.

Hilarides' mission priorities include "It's All About the Ships," "Technical Excellence And Judiciousness," and



"Culture of Affordability." Under each are more specific focus areas.

Within "It's All About the Ships" Hilarides intends to focus on improving ship maintenance, reinvigorating shipboard preventative maintenance and warfighting system commonality."

"Ultimately the things that the Navy brings to the nation are delivered to the point of effect by a ship, the ship itself, the weapons that are on that ship, the systems that are deployed on that ship, the aircraft that deployed from that ship," said Hilarides. "It all comes from the ship and in that sense it's all about the ship. That is the lens I look at our business through and

if it is not going on a ship we should be asking ourselves why are we doing it."

Hilarides' second mission priority is Technical Excellence And Judiciousness, which focuses on accelerating knowledge transfer, modern learning/knowledge management and exploiting the "Knee in the Curve." Hilarides explained that although NAVSEA has an incredible reputation for technical excellence his priority of Technical Excellence And Judiciousness doesn't strictly deal with the technical aspect of engineering, but also with being a good steward of taxpayer dollars. "Judiciousness is really about our role as the technical conscience, but a cost-wise technical conscience of the Navy," said Hilarides. "It is easy to take the most conservative technical approach and not take cost into consideration. It is hardest to find the right balance of technical excellence and cost."

His third priority is culture of affordability, which focuses on challenging every requirement, reestablishing the Ship Characteristics Improvement Board and maximizing commonality across platforms. Hilarides' third priority plays off of the judiciousness aspect of his second priority. He explained that affordability should be on an employee's radar every day. "With the Navy's budget going down, these are going to be very challenging times because the nation needs defense to be cost effective now more than any time in the last 10 or 15 years," said Hilarides. "We have to put that in our culture, we have to make sure we understand our requirements, challenge those requirements and find the places where costs





can be saved so that we can deliver the most ships and capability for the Navy.”

Key Enablers

Hilarides went on to explain that there are a few key enablers that need to be achieved for the strategic framework to be successful. His key enablers are people and teamwork, innovation, contracting and metrics. “First and foremost, teamwork is probably our most important enabler,” said Hilarides.” We need a technically capable and agile workforce, and then we need that workforce to operate effectively as teams. Teams to do individual things like buy a ship, but also teams to do things like take a ship and bring it to service, modernize it and sustain it.”

With his second enabler, innovation, Hilarides explained that he intends to unleash the ideas that he knows are in the minds of NAVSEA employees to help make ships not just “more effective, but cost-effective as well.

Hilarides went onto explain that one of his personal strengths resides within his third enabler, contracting. “It’s an area of strength for me having been a PEO for five and a half years; I intend to focus on it.”

Hilarides explained that his final enabler, metrics, is one of the most effective ways to help maintain focus on strategic vision. “I will say it’s easier to focus on the tactical, day-to-day things it takes to get a ship underway, delivered, out of availability or fixed,” said Hilarides. “The hard part of that is to look forward and to maintain your focus on your strategic vision. The best way I have

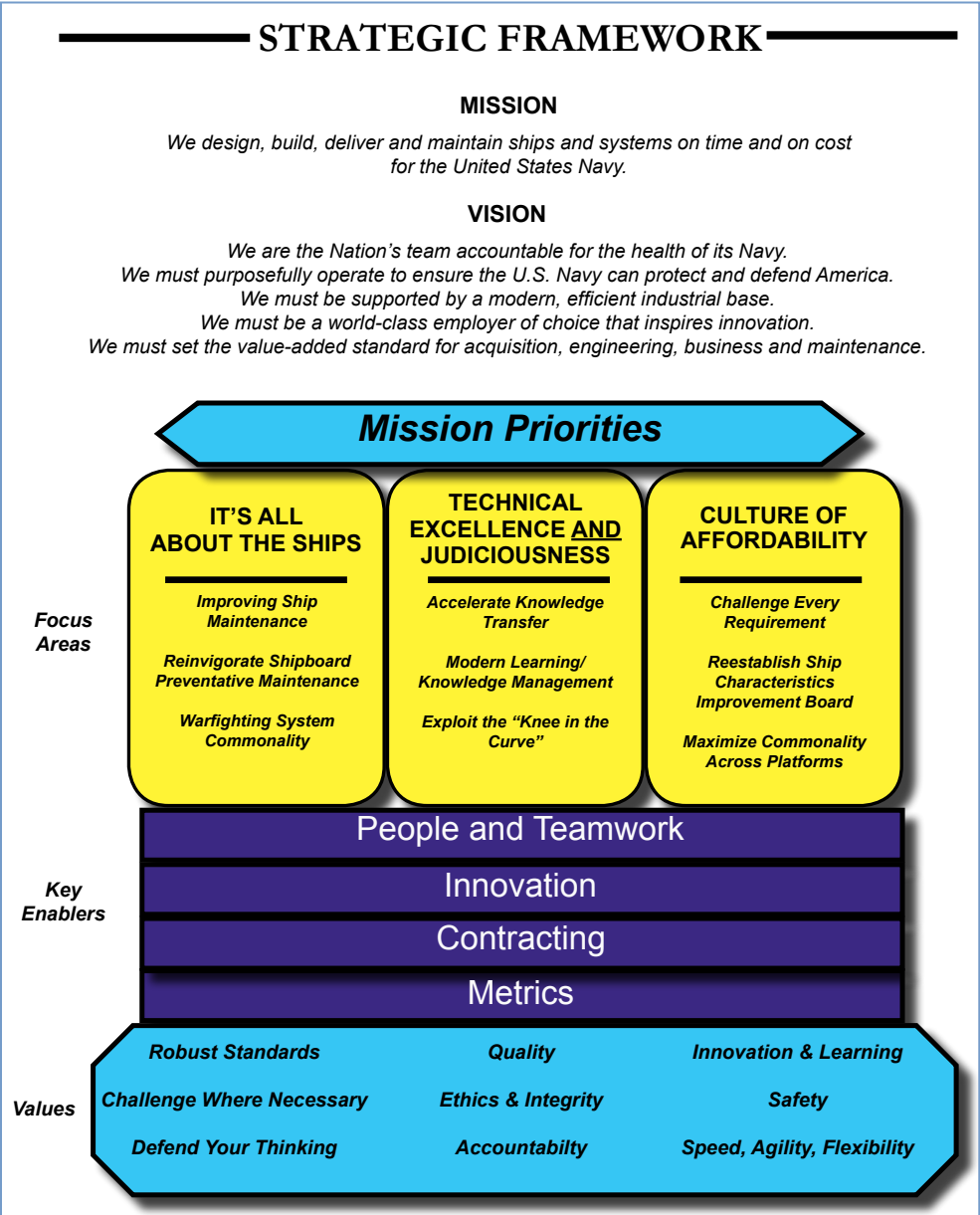
found to do that is to have good metrics that represent those long term trends. Hilarides explained that the “daily tactical battle” is still very important, but that tracking metrics are crucial to help understand long term trends to be able to make progress.

In a video recorded for release to the NAVSEA workforce following his

assumption of command, Hilarides took the opportunity to elaborate on his

personal core values that make up who he is. He discussed the importance of competency, integrity, safety and the ethics. “I will tell you that everything I have done in the Navy has been about technical competency and integrity,” he said. “It’s very important that we challenge the things that don’t seem right to us and we have to feel that there is no punishment, that you are rewarded for challenging those things. We have a tremendous responsibility to build, sustain and modernize our nation’s fleet and that is done by our team, an incredibly talented team of military and civilian professionals.”

To view Vice Adm. Hilarides’ video in full visit www.navsea.navy.mil.



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